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FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1175
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS JERUSALEM 000628

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE; NEA/IPA FOR
GOLDBERGER/SHAMPAINE/SACHAR; NSC FOR ABRAMS/PASCUAL;
TREASURY FOR CONNOLLY;
DEPT PLEASE PASS TO USAID FOR ANE/MEA:MCCLLOUD/BORODIN

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [ELAB](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#)
SUBJECT: PA STRIKES CONTINUE DESPITE COURT ORDER

REF: A. JERUSALEM 615

[1](#)B. JERUSALEM 588

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary. The PA Employees Union and the Palestinian Teachers Union continued their strike on April 10 in defiance of a Palestinian High Court order. The High Court issued an injunction against the strike on April 9 and ordered the union to present its case at a follow-up hearing on April 30.

Approximately 1500 PA employees demonstrated peacefully in front of the Prime Minister's office on April 9. A number of PLC members, including the head of the Fatah parliamentary bloc, spoke in support of the employees' demands. In public comments, PM Salam Fayyad praised the role of the judicial system as a crucial pillar of good governance. There were continuing mediation efforts ongoing April 10. End Summary.

Strikes Continue, Despite Court Order

[1](#)2. (SBU) On April 9, the Palestinian High Court agreed to review the PA petition to block the strike, which the government had filed in accordance with President Abbas' April 6 decree (reftels). The court ordered the strike be suspended, pending a hearing set for April 30. It gave the unions fifteen days to present their case to the court. In public comments after the court hearing, Fayyad praised the role of an independent judiciary in building the foundations of good government.

[1](#)3. (SBU) The strikes continued on April 10, with PA schools closed and other PA offices open only part of the day. PA Employees Union head Bassam Zakarneh complained that the union's lawyer had been ordered out of the High Court hearing and said that, because the court had "refused" to hear the union's position, the union would "consider next steps" once it received the High Court's order in writing.

Unions' Protest Peacefully, Get Politicians' Support

[1](#)4. (SBU) Approximately 1500 PA employees demonstrated peacefully in front of the Prime Minister's office for about ninety minutes on April 9. A number of speakers expressed support for the employees and urged the government to meet their demands. Speakers included prominent members of the Palestine Legislative Council (PLC), including the head of the Fatah bloc Azzam al-Ahmad.

[1](#)5. (SBU) On April 10, Azzam al-Ahmad continued his efforts to mediate an end to the dispute (as outlined ref A). In a

meeting with President Abbas, Al-Ahmad asked Fayyad to freeze the government's actions against the striking workers. Fayyad refused. However, Fayyad's representatives (including Cabinet Secretary Sa'adi al-Krunz) continued to meet with union leaders throughout the day.

Comment

[16](#). (SBU) The court ruling was a victory for the government, but the Fatah-inspired agitation against the government has not ended.

WALLES